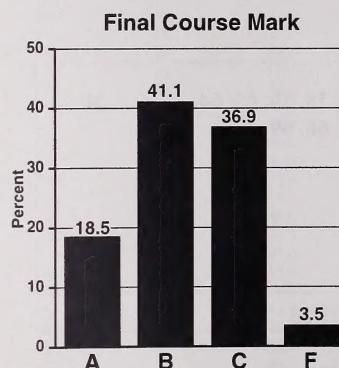
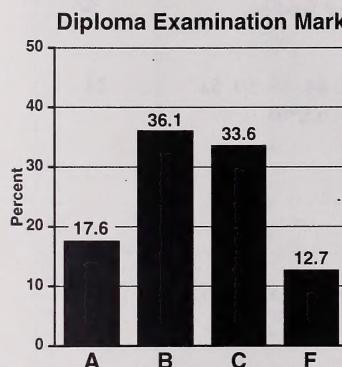
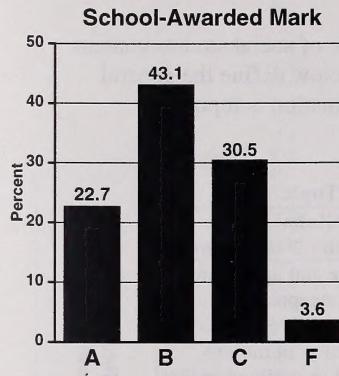


Social Studies 30

Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for January 1999



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, and students with an overview of results from the January 1999 administration of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that are provided electronically to schools and school jurisdiction offices. A provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, April, June, and August results is made available annually.

Description of the Examination

The Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a multiple-choice section worth 70% and a written-response section worth 30% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 8 021 students who wrote the January 1999 examination and received a school-awarded mark.

- 96.5% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 18.5% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Of the students who wrote the January 1999 examination, 52.3% were female and 47.7% were male.

- 95.6% of the female students and 97.5% of the male students achieved the acceptable standard
- 16.0% of the female students and 21.3% of the male students achieved the standard of excellence

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 69.4%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 65.8%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 67.9%.

Part A: Multiple Choice

Examination Blueprint

Part A: *Multiple Choice* has a value of 70 marks, one mark for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: by the curricular content area (topic) being tested and by the knowledge and skill objectives required to answer the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in January 1999 according to these classifications.

All questions on the diploma examination require students to demonstrate knowledge of social studies content and to apply social studies skills to that knowledge base. The reporting categories below define the general types of questions that appear on the examination and the categories for which information is reported.

Question Classification by Knowledge and Skill Objectives	Question Classification by Topic		Total Questions
	Topic A: Political and Economic Systems	Topic B: Global Interaction in the 20th Century	
Comprehension of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of generalizations, key concepts, and facts related to social studies content.	1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 12, 18, 26, 32, 33, 34, 35	38, 39, 42, 44, 45, 50, 51, 52, 60, 61, 62, 70	24
Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge of social studies content by interpreting and analyzing information and ideas.	4, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 21, 24, 27	36, 37, 40, 41, 43, 46, 47, 48, 54, 55, 56	22
Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge of social studies content by synthesizing information and ideas, and evaluating their accuracy and worth.	5, 7, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31	49, 53, 57, 58, 59, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69	24
Total Questions	35	35	70

Subtest Results*

Results are reported in average raw scores.

Total Part A: 47.7 out of 70

by Topic

- Political and Economic Systems: 25.0 out of 35
- Global Interaction in the 20th Century: 22.7 out of 35

by Knowledge and Skill Objectives

- Comprehension of Information and Ideas: 16.1 out of 24
- Interpretation and Analysis of Information and Ideas: 15.3 out of 22
- Synthesis and Evaluation of Information and Ideas: 16.3 out of 24

*Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school results.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	B	51.1
2	B	77.3
3	D	65.3
4	A	69.5
5	C	61.3
6	D	74.4
7	A	60.7
8	B	79.2
9	A	74.6
10	A	67.9
11	B	82.0
12	A	71.7
13	A	76.2
14	B	62.8
15	D	80.8
16	C	55.2
17	B	72.6
18	A	65.6
19	D	69.1
20	C	86.1
21	B	70.3
22	C	75.4
23	D	81.5
24	D	68.2
25	B	93.0
26	C	60.9
27	A	72.7
28	C	64.6
29	B	74.3
30	C	80.1
31	D	77.3
32	D	58.9
33	C	80.7
34	D	52.9
35	A	81.2
36	C	68.3
37	B	70.1
38	D	79.1
39	C	80.6
40	B	68.2
41	B	68.8
42	A	76.0
43	B	80.0
44	C	49.4
45	B	61.2
46	C	54.1
47	B	82.8
48	A	60.8
49	D	70.0
50	C	73.2
51	A	67.1
52	B	64.2
53	A	60.5
54	D	53.3
55	D	66.7
56	A	59.7
57	B	69.0
58	A	56.4
59	C	72.9
60	D	55.2
61	D	49.6
62	A	42.9
63	A	63.0
64	B	52.6
65	C	46.3
66	A	47.3
67	B	71.1
68	C	62.0
69	A	80.2
70	C	88.9

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results with the provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examiners' Comments

The multiple-choice section of the examination requires students to go beyond simply recalling information to apply their knowledge and thinking skills. Students must demonstrate that they understand social studies concepts; that they comprehend historical, political, and economic relationships; and that they can interpret and evaluate social studies information and ideas.

During the marking session, markers were asked whether the standards embedded in the multiple-choice questions were appropriate and fair.

These teachers generally concurred that this section of the examination set an appropriately demanding standard of achievement for graduating Social Studies 30 students. They found the data sources relevant and engaging and the questions challenging but fair.

The following table gives results for seven questions selected from the examination and shows the percentage of students, in five groups, that answered each question correctly. The comments on pages 4 and 5 address some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number						
	13	14	25	44	54	55	56
All students	76.2	62.8	93.0	49.4	53.3	66.7	59.7
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	96.9	80.1	97.9	67.1	87.0	69.6	88.7
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received marks between 65% and 79%, or B, on the whole examination	84.3	69.5	96.1	53.9	63.8	63.9	68.5
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received marks between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	66.0	56.3	92.5	42.9	36.9	67.0	47.2
Students who have not achieved the <i>acceptable standard</i> (49% or less) on the whole examination	51.7	37.1	78.7	29.1	20.5	69.6	27.5

*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly

Use the following information to answer questions 13 and 14.

Comparison of Principles Underlying the Traditional Liberal/Conservative Debate	
Liberals advocate:	Conservatives advocate:
A. Progressive change	Maintaining the status quo
B. Economic intervention	Minimal government intervention
C. Redistribution of wealth	Protection of property rights
D. Social and economic security	Individual self-reliance

Choose the pair of underlying principles above that **best defines** the basis of the debate on the issues presented in questions 13 and 14.

13. Should the Canadian government abolish the Senate? (**Key A**)
14. Should the Canadian government legislate wage and price controls? (**Key B**)

Use the following excerpt to answer questions 24 and 25.

The expenditures of one group are the incomes of another. When one is without income because of unemployment, he or she is not the only loser; one's grocer and one's barber suffer too. If one is given unemployment insurance benefits, he or she is not the only person to gain. To spread the cost of the insurance more widely over those who benefit, the government uses its power to collect the money not only from employees but also from employers and the general public.

—from *Political and Economic Systems*

25. The main point made in this excerpt could **best** be used to support the affirmative position for which of the following debate resolutions?

- A. Be it resolved that corporations should downsize to increase efficiency and productivity.
- * B. Be it resolved that governments should intervene in the economy to preserve economic security.
- C. Be it resolved that corporations should move their capital and factories to nations with low labour costs.
- D. Be it resolved that governments should lower their national deficits by cutting back on social programs.

Questions 13 and 14 required students to categorize two contemporary Canadian issues according to certain contrasting principles associated with traditional liberal and conservative perspectives. Students had to recognize the relationship between an issue and the debate it would likely incite from two different points of view.

Neither question was overly difficult: 76.2% of all students and 96.9% of those who achieved the standard of excellence answered question 13 correctly, and 62.8% of all students and 80.1% of those achieving the standard of excellence answered question 14 correctly. The achievement results from these questions (and similar ones throughout the examination) are a credit to the critical thinking skills and grasp of knowledge demonstrated by many of Alberta's Grade 12 social studies students.

Question 25 was one of a set of two questions based on an excerpt delving into the generic idea of economic interdependence. Question 25 presented an interesting series of requirements.

This question not only tested students' ability to discern a particular representation of a key social studies concept but also to recognize how the application of this representation could be used to support one side in a debate on a specific resolution. Students again proved to be very capable in dealing with this complex task in critical thinking and are to be congratulated: 93.0% of all students answered question 25 correctly.

44. Which objective was common to the Casablanca (1943), Tehran (1943), Cairo (1943), and Yalta (1945) conferences?

- A. To establish a successor organization to the League of Nations
- B. To condemn Soviet expansion and aggression in Eastern Europe
- * C. To develop and approve Allied plans to defeat the Axis powers
- D. To approve financial resources for the development of atomic weapons

Use the following diagram to answer questions 54 to 56.



54. Which nations have been placed **incorrectly** in this diagram?

- A. Italy and Poland
- B. Belgium and Hungary
- C. Great Britain and Bulgaria
- * D. Czechoslovakia and Austria

55. According to its established diplomatic stance and foreign policy during this period, which nation belongs in the shaded area of the diagram?

- A. Norway
- B. Greece
- C. Denmark
- * D. Yugoslavia

56. Within the context of the diagram, which of the following nations could be placed to the right of the shaded area?

- * A. Romania
- B. Sweden
- C. Turkey
- D. France

Question 44 required students to associate a shared purpose with the convening of three major Second World War Allied conferences. Students had to move beyond the simple recall of factual information to the recognition of a relationship. The question proved to be difficult: 49.4% of all students and 67.1% of students achieving the standard of excellence chose the correct response. That 25.5% of students concluded that a common objective of these conferences was to halt Soviet expansion in Europe suggests an interesting gap in historical perception.

Questions 54, 55, and 56 comprised a set of questions based on a Venn diagram showing a particular arrangement of European nations within the Cold War context of the 1960s.

To answer question 54 correctly, students had to determine which two nations had been improperly placed according to the context of the diagram. Students found the question somewhat difficult: 53.3% of all students but 87.0% of those achieving the standard of excellence responded correctly.

Question 55 required students, once they had established the Cold War division shown in the diagram, to identify a country whose characteristic pursuit of national interests exhibited connections in both camps. The question, at one level, did not prove to be difficult: 66.7% of all students chose the correct response. What is intriguing, however, is that 69.6% of students achieving the standard of excellence selected the keyed response *but so did* 63.9% of students who achieved between 65% and 79%, 67.0% of students who achieved between 50% and 64%, and 69.6% of students who failed the examination. These results suggest that many students, perhaps unclear as to the answer, may have resorted to name recognition; that is, "when in doubt, choose newsworthy Yugoslavia." This strategy seems to have been true for all groups. This revealing result, then, is unusual in that examination questions typically discriminate among sub-groups. It raises a concern regarding students' understanding of an important feature of Cold War geopolitics.

Question 56 asked students to link a location within the diagram to a nation, in this instance, a former Warsaw Pact member. Students did not find this question overly difficult, with 59.7% of all students answering the question correctly. As well, 88.7% of students achieving the standard of excellence chose the correct response.

An even closer statistical review of these questions reveals that of the total number of females who answered questions 54 and 56, only 44.7% and 51.6%, respectively, answered correctly compared with 62.8% and 68.6%, respectively, of males. To further complicate matters, 68.2% of females answered question 55 correctly compared with 65.0% of males. Readers are invited to speculate as to the intriguing nature of some of the results from this family of questions.

Part B: Written Response

The results for the written-response section of the Social Studies 30 Diploma Examination are tabulated according to the percentage of students achieving each score (1 to 5) in the four scoring categories. Each scoring category assesses different but interrelated skills and knowledge; consequently, individual students' scores are likely to vary from one category to another. Those students who achieve at or above the standard of excellence (80%) on the written-response section tend to have scores of **4 Proficient** or **5 Excellent** for all scoring categories. Students meeting the acceptable standard (50%) on the written-response section tend to have scores of **3 Satisfactory** or greater for most scoring categories but may produce **2 Limited** work for one or two categories.

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignment and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing these results is at the **3 Satisfactory** level. The scoring guides that describe scoring criteria are in the 1998-99 *Social Studies 30 Information Bulletin*.

The written-response section contributes 30% of the total examination mark. Students are required to write one complete and unified essay in which they discuss the importance and complexity of an issue and rationally defend their position by using supportive, relevant evidence. The organization of arguments should show evidence of logical thought that should persuade the reader. Students are expected to make use of their critical and creative thinking skills to demonstrate complex and independent thought.

Part B: Written Response has a total value of 30 marks: 10 marks each for *Defence of Position* and *Quality of Examples*, and five marks each for *Exploration of the Issue* and *Quality of Language and Expression*. The average raw score mean for Part B was 18.1 out of 30. By comparing school and jurisdiction results with the provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
		Excellent 5	4.5	Proficient 4	3.5	Satisfactory 3	2.5	Limited 2	1.5	Poor 1	Ins*
Exploration of the Issue	5	2.6	4.3	11.1	15.0	27.0	19.3	15.3	4.0	1.5	0.1
Defence of Position	10	2.3	4.3	10.9	15.3	27.6	19.7	15.4	3.2	1.2	0.1
Quality of Examples	10	2.3	3.9	9.4	13.1	25.3	19.7	18.4	5.3	2.4	0.1
Quality of Language and Expression	5	3.3	5.4	14.9	18.2	39.6	12.8	4.8	0.7	0.2	0.1

* **Ins** (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded the acceptable standard. Students with scores of 4, 4.5, and/or 5 have achieved the standard of excellence.

Topic A

Some people believe that certain groups in society are more capable of making fair and wise political decisions than are the majority of citizens. Other people believe that all citizens must be involved in political decision making.

To what extent should political decision making be restricted to a specific group in society?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Topic B

Some people believe that as we approach the end of the twentieth century, the world is entering an age of peace and stability unparalleled since the end of the First World War. Other people believe, however, that the post-Cold War era has ushered in an age of nationalist tension and conflict in many parts of the world.

As we approach the twenty-first century, has the world become a more dangerous place?

In your essay, take and defend a position on this issue.

Examiners' Comments

The results of the written-response component for the January 1999 examination revealed a very encouraging average score (18.1/30) in line with those scores achieved provincially over the last three years. These are among the highest average scores achieved since 1984 and may represent, in part, results arising from an emerging population shift as more and more students deliberately choose to register in Social Studies 33 each semester. This development does not discount ample evidence of growing confidence and academic rigour on the part of Alberta students in composing their position papers. What it does suggest, however, is the need for further study.

Many teacher-markers commented on the confidence demonstrated by an encouraging number of students in developing well-informed and thoughtfully organized papers. Most noticeable and impressive was the diverse number of examples, both contemporary and historical, used as evidence, particularly in dealing with Topic B. Many students also made appropriate use of supportive ideas and details found in the multiple-choice section of the examination. Many markers observed that student essays were generally lengthier but still maintained focus. Also, as a general comment borne out by actual results, fewer students were awarded insufficient or poor marks.

There were, as well, a number of cautions voiced by markers in regard to some of the approaches that were taken to Topic A. For some students, the challenge of articulating abstract thought often led to revealing conceptual confusion or, alternately, a tendency toward

what one marker coined "topic drift" whereby the unravelling of extraneous information was offered as coherent thought. Markers were often struck by a certain simplicity or naivety expressed by some students in the broadest of unintentional understatement: "Totalitarian governments have the tendency to forego the rights of individuals. . . ." or "Governments that have no qualms about killing their own citizens cannot be representing what is good." Perhaps these pronouncements represent the delights of youthful intellectual discovery. So too was a noticeable and unfortunate detachment or distancing shown by many students from "the government," which to them resembled a kind of alien entity—the government "out there"—quite distinct and removed from the people it represents even in a democracy. These concerns were often offset, as mentioned earlier, by the wealth of examples used by students in support of their arguments—from the integration of key concepts such as representative or proportional representation, checks and balances, elites, and legitimacy to the development of effective case studies using such examples as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union.

In dealing with Topic B, many students presented an interesting array of examples that often demonstrated a strong grasp of current events. For the most part, students contextualized and referenced the topic historically; some, however, chose to personalize perceptions to the extent that in their opinion, the world had become a more dangerous place because of such assorted phenomena as rising crime rates, school gangs, ice storms and even speeding drivers. Students are well advised to read and to consider carefully the preamble to each essay topic before getting under way.

In supporting their position on Topic B that the world has become a more dangerous place, students alluded to everything from the destructive advances of ethnic nationalism and the threat of retaining arsenals of nuclear weapons through to the ravages of poverty, racism, ignorance, and environmental degradation. Others argued that the world has become a less dangerous place by expounding on the triumphs and laudable efforts of the United Nations, the positive aspects of globalization, and the regenerative growth of democracy throughout the world. Significantly, however, student papers expressing pessimism and doom and gloom for the future far outnumbered those that did not.



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Students achieving the acceptable standard were able to express an adequate understanding of the complexity and significance of an issue. These writers often recognized the principles underlying different viewpoints associated with an issue and generally established a historical or contemporary frame of reference for an issue's importance. Students achieving the standard of excellence perceptively investigated the complexity and significance of the issue, often throughout the fabric of their response. Such students were comfortable revealing to the reader what they genuinely thought, rather than attempting to write what they felt the reader wanted to hear.

As in previous administrations, many students demonstrated an awareness that a stronger position paper is developed by establishing a basis for each argument or reason and then applying specific historical and contemporary examples as supportive evidence for each argument. Students achieving the acceptable standard supported their position with several adequate arguments. Although these arguments lacked elaboration and depth of understanding, they were connected to the issue under discussion and to the position taken. Supportive evidence used by these writers to bolster an argument was generally relevant but not error-free, and more often general rather than specific in presentation. Such writers, despite making minor errors, demonstrated control of the conventions of language.

Students achieving below the acceptable standard did not link their examples in a meaningful way to their positions and often exhibited vagueness and confusion with key social studies concepts. They developed evidence primarily in descriptive terms, unloading as much data as they could recall, thereby exhibiting little sense of its organization and applicability. Superficial descriptions of detail and the presentation of extraneous information resulted in lower scores. Students achieving below the acceptable standard demonstrated poor control of conventions.

Students achieving the standard of excellence composed powerful and forceful arguments that were firmly rooted in the application of germane, well-chosen evidence—evidence that in many instances supported a qualified position. Students at this level wrote carefully organized essays that were essentially free from errors in mechanics and grammar.

Generally, teachers were very satisfied with the curricular fit of the two written-response questions. Based on a review of the essays submitted for the January 1999 writing of the Social Studies 30 Examination, Alberta's students have learned a great deal and their marks reflect this achievement.

Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B

Part A	Part B	
A 26.9%	13.1%	While it is not intended that parts A and B of the examination be considered as separate examinations or that each part necessarily tests the same curricular objectives, it is interesting to see the distribution of student results.
B 32.1%	21.3%	
C 28.1%	43.4%	
F 12.9%	22.2%	In January 1999, considerably more students were awarded scores in the "A" category on Part A of the examination than on Part B, and considerably more students were awarded scores in the "F" category on Part B of the examination than on Part A. These scores do not signal a new phenomenon, but are consistent with results of recent administrations.

For further information, contact Barry Jonas (bjonas@edc.gov.ab.ca) or Elana Scraba (escraba@edc.gov.ab.ca) at the Student Evaluation Branch at 427-0010. To call toll-free from outside of Edmonton, dial 310-0000.

Examples of Students' Writing from the January 1999 administration of Social Studies 30 are posted on the Alberta Education extranet site. The examples and the accompanying rationales illustrate the standards for written response.

You can access the extranet by using your school's access number. Every principal has this information. Should you experience any difficulty with access or with finding material on the extranet, please call the Help Desk at (780)427-1111.

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